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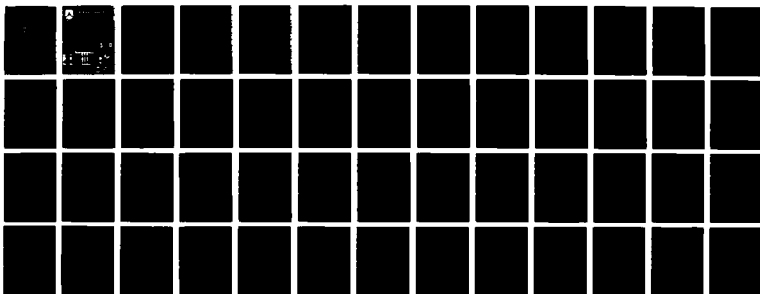
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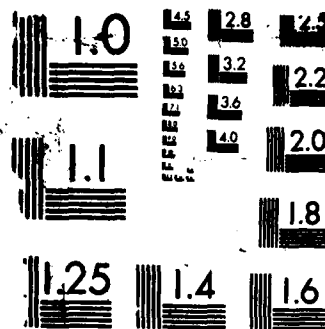
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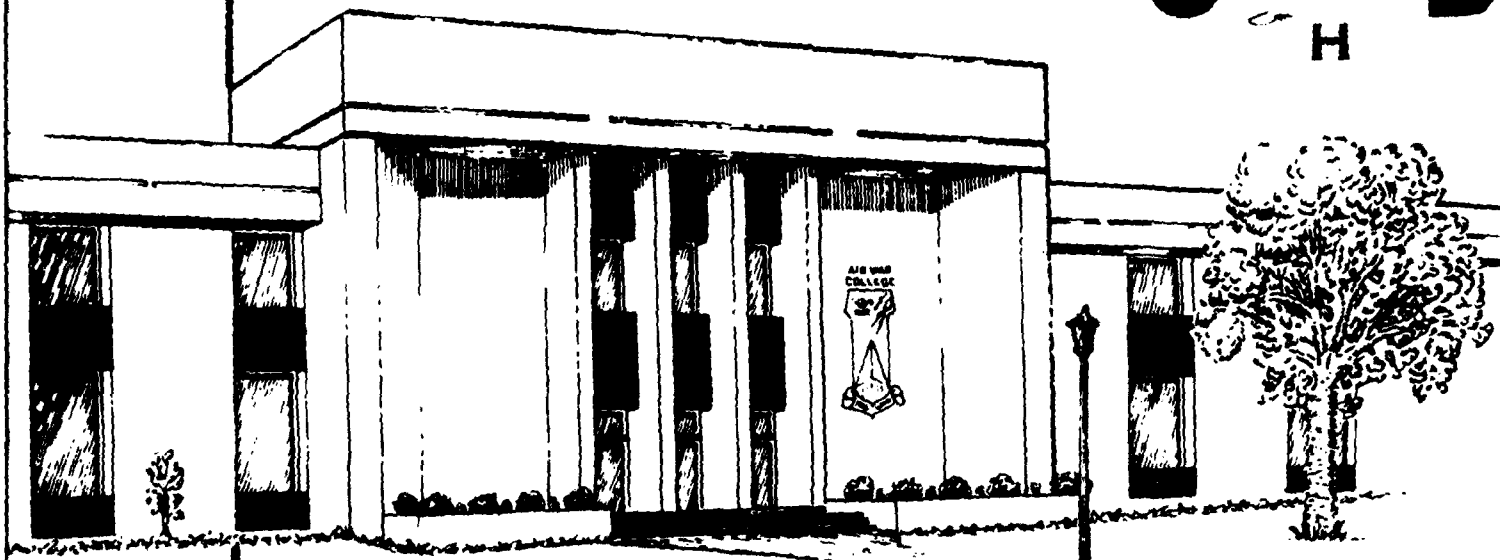
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US NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN:  
A CREDIBLE DETERRENT

By COMMANDER CHARLES D. SCHWALIER, USN

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US NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN:  
A CREDIBLE DETERRENT

by

CHARLES D. SCHWALIER  
COMMANDER, USN

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
IN  
FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH  
REQUIREMENT

THESIS ADVISOR: LIEUTENANT COLONEL LORENZO M. CROWELL

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

MAY 1987



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AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH PAPER ABSTRACT

TITLE: US Naval Presence in the Indian Ocean: a Credible Deterrent

AUTHOR: Charles D. Schwalier, Commander, USN

→ The purpose of this research paper is twofold: (1) to enlighten critics and skeptics who argue against United States naval presence in the Indian Ocean and to establish that, until the littoral states demonstrate a capability to protect the sea lines of communication with a combined, mutually supportive military force, a strong United States presence is necessary and , alone, will continue to ensure rights of passage and freedom of access to all user nations; and (2) to counter the false notion that the carrier battle group is highly vulnerable and will meet an early death in a high intensity conflict.

Historical data, both geopolitical and sociological, current events, and existing naval capabilities of the Indian Ocean states will be discussed briefly in support of the author's thesis.

Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean is very real and formidable. They currently have the capacity to rapidly mobilize their forces to bolster their maritime assets in the region. Their ultimate goal is to achieve a world communist revolution which will guarantee them greater territorial control and economic power in the world trade arena. Toward this end, they seek to dominate the Indian Ocean, specifically access to the oil routes and control of the source of oil. Although, in Red Storm Rising, author Jim Clancy portrays the Soviet Union as a nation of high risk takers, contrary to what they have demonstrated

throughout their history, the battle scenario that he unfolds in the Indian Ocean as the Soviets attempt to take over the Persian Gulf may be closer to fact than fiction.

The United States' task is not easy. The requirements for a capability to sustain a military force and to project power in the Indian Ocean are not unmanageable. A continued US naval presence has demonstrated repeatedly that regional stability can be achieved through both diplomatic and "show of force" means, and will continue to have a positive impact for years to come.



## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Commander Charles D. Schwalier (BS degree in Physics/Oceanography from the United States Naval Academy) has had extensive experience in the Indian Ocean as a Light Attack aviator attached to both USS Constellation (CV-64) and USS Midway (CV-41). Involved in the projection of naval power during the North-South Yemen War, the Iran Hostage Crisis, and continuing threats to Persian Gulf shipping lanes from 1978 through 1986, Commander Schwalier has experienced first hand the complex issues effecting stability in the Indian Ocean littoral. Additionally, he has served on board USS Robert A. Owens (DD-827), Fleet Logistics Support Squadron THIRTY, and as an instructor pilot in Attack Squadron ONE TWO TWO. With his background in the Surface, Logistic, and Combat Air Navy, Commander Schwalier has insight into the critical aspects of extended Indian Ocean deployments and the United States Navy's important role in protecting our national security interests. Commander Schwalier is a graduate of the Air War College class of 1987.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Although the significance of the Indian Ocean region has been in the forefront of United States concerns for only two decades, analysis of available historical data indicates that, for centuries, major powers have expressed grave concern over regional geopolitical stability and freedom of access to the trade routes. As early as the 16th century, attempts to exploit and profit from the "riches of the East," the "Spice Routes," by Western European countries created active, oftentimes volatile competition. Excursions by the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and finally the British resulted in marginally successful efforts to colonize and subjugate millions of people. The diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds, coupled with a lack of a common language, were aggravated as sources of conflict when geographic boundaries were created where previously none existed. The seeds for a tumultuous post colonial future were sown. This future became riddled with explosive territorial and religious wars. The end result and current situation in the Indian Ocean has the potential to not only disrupt a fragile world economic balance, but also bring the super powers to their knees.

Should any one country or group of countries attempt to exert, or successfully exert, enough military or political force to disrupt or control the sea lines of communication (SLOCs), specifically the major regional choke points (Cape of Good Hope, Suez, Bab el Mandeb, Mozambique Channel, Strait of Hormuz, Malacca Straits, and the Sunda Straits), and disrupt one of the many sources of world concern, the

flow of oil (energy), the results, on a global scale, would be cataclysmic. The solution to this problem is simple. Maintain regional stability and unify the littoral states to protect the region from misuse, abuse, and dangerous exploitation. The question, however, remains that, since there is much instability among the littoral states, how does one achieve stability? How does one control the current turmoil and prevent intervention by powers desiring to exploit this regional instability to achieve goals not necessarily supportive of world peace?

Over 60 percent of the world's proven petroleum reserves are in the Persian Gulf states. Currently the United States, Western Europe, and Japan receive 30, 65, and 75 percent of their oil requirements respectively from this region. (1:268) Does this dependence indicate that these heavy users should be responsible for the stability and defense of the region? Are the Indian Ocean states alone capable of defending the third largest ocean in the world which annually handles over 30,000 ship transits (the third greatest volume of maritime traffic in the world)? (2:8)

These questions will be addressed. There are no simple solutions to the problems faced by the Indian Ocean states. The issues are much too complex. A violent history has set the precedent.

During the periods of colonization by Western European powers, many of the littoral states gradually transitioned from nomadic, independent, tribal communities to organized, yet restricted populations. Self-rule and independence became focal issues and goals. However, the territorial boundaries imposed during the colonization period created major stumbling blocks. These boundaries were artificially created and, in most cases,

indiscriminately divided ethnic and cultural entities. (1:12)

For centuries, defense of the Indian Ocean SLOCs was the responsibility of the greatest user power. Of these powers, the British, until their withdrawal from east of the Suez in 1968, had assumed primary responsibility for protection of the sea lanes in support of their mercantile interests in the region. Upon Britain's departure, the French with the help of Iran under the Shah and, to a lesser extent, Saudi Arabia became protectors of the Gulf. The United States, heavily involved in the Vietnam conflict, was unable and unwilling to divert attention or resources to the area to fill the void. This concern and perceived requirement to fill the power vacuum has been debated by scholars world-wide who feel that the original idea of maintaining a power base was a result of Great Britain's need for sea control to protect the SLOCs between Great Britain and its colonies. Some argue that the present intent of the "power vacuum theory" is only a ruse to cover up the real motives of the super powers: exploitation of Indian Ocean resources. (3:15) Regardless, perceiving an obvious weakness in the power base of the Indian Ocean region, the Soviet Union began deploying 15 to 20 combat and support vessels to establish a formidable naval presence. (4:164)

Fleet Admiral Sergey G. Gorshkov of the Soviet Navy saw early in his career the importance of maritime control. A staunch communist, he envisioned the mission of the Soviet Navy as:

The friendly visit of the Soviet Navy men make it possible for the people of many countries to become convinced with their own eyes of the creativity of the ideals of communism. . . . They see warships as embodying the achievements of Soviet science, technology, and industry. (4:165)

Author's Joseph L. Nogee and Robert H. Donaldson in their book, Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II, expressed Soviet goals from a more hard-line position. This position seems more congruent with a free world view of the Soviet ideology.

Among the objectives pursued by Moscow in its Middle Eastern involvement were both a desire to hasten the decline of "imperialist" influence (primarily British and French) in the area, and an effort to forestall or combat the erection of Western sponsored anti communist alliances . . . (4:120)

In that global revolution is a principle tenant of the communist ideology, ultimate control of the Indian Ocean becomes an automatic Soviet goal. Toward this end, the Soviet Union has had considerable success in this unstable region. Through manipulative ruses promising salvation from external and internal strife in the form of financial or military aid and by sympathetic reaction (the "we can relate approach"), the Soviets have opened many strategic doors in the region. The number of Soviet advisors and other direct involvement, usually a condition for receiving aid, have increased. As littoral states become more dependent on the Soviet Union or, as in the case of Afghanistan, the Soviet Union forcefully exerts control, Soviet puppet states are developed and the communist sphere of influence grows.

This research paper will attempt to accomplish two goals: It will (1) enlighten critics and skeptics who argue against United States presence in the Indian Ocean and establish that, until the littoral states demonstrate a capability to protect the SLOCs with a combined, mutually supportive military force, a strong United States presence is necessary and, alone, will continue to ensure rights of passage and freedom of access to all user nations; and (2) demonstrate that the current method to project power by the employment of a United States

Navy carrier battle group (CVBG) is credible and survivable.

Analysis of regional issues and military capabilities of the littoral states will support the author's thesis. The threat of Soviet control of a region vital to the economic survival of the free world must be countered. Repeatedly, the United States has demonstrated that it can accomplish this mission. The presence of the United States Navy in the Indian Ocean, as a diplomatic tool, has dramatically increased the Soviet "risk Factor." As long as American presence continues, Soviet goals in the region will be difficult to achieve.

## CHAPTER II

### THE THREAT

Although regional conflicts periodically threaten maritime transit to and from the Persian Gulf (Iran-Iraq War for example) there has never been a concerted effort by any of the Indian Ocean littoral states to actively seize and dominate either the resources or the SLOCs of the region. Such actions would be counterproductive considering their vast petroleum and mineral trade with user nations. Greed, mismanagement, and monopolization could rapidly lead to an escalation in the littoral states' and major powers' involvement. In response to this threat numerous organizations have been created. Of these, the Gulf Council for Cooperation (GCC), Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), Central Treaty Organization (CENTO--now defunct), Association of Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (ASEAN), Organization of Islamic Conference, and others, their primary objective in this area of the world is to promote and maintain regional economic stability and provide for a united defense should mutual national interests be threatened.

The only super power, with a sufficient power base to control the Indian Ocean region, that has consistently demonstrated overt designs is the Soviet Union. Neither the United States, China, Japan, nor Western Europe demonstrate similar intentions. Whether the Soviets can accomplish their goals will be discussed later. However, unless ideologies change significantly or internal problems in the Soviet Union diminish, chances of achieving their global ambitions are nil. The problem remains,

regardless of whether they can win or not, that their mindset compels them to try. ( 5:84)

The Soviet grand strategy was best defined in a 1969 Special Report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies panel:

The Soviet Union has embarked on a maritime strategy designed to help it break out of its long history of continental confinement. This policy means, in the first instance, attempts to control the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and ultimately the Mediterranean. The policy also envisions Soviet predominance in the Sea of Japan to the east, the Greenland-Iceland-Faeroe Island Gap to the west, and the Indian Ocean to the south. Beyond these goals, the Soviets want to gain dominant influence at several major junctions of the world's seaways. Specifically, they have their sights on the Suez Canal, the Bab el Mandeb, the Straits of Malacca, and the Straits of Gibraltar. ( 6:3)

There are numerous arguments against the Soviet expansion theory. Critics of super power presence in the region charge that the East-West conflict, parrying for global power, alone has created the volatile situation that we see today. Some suggest that the super powers are meddling where they do not belong and that, were the region and its resources left to the complete control and security of the littoral states, without super power influence, the "Arc of Crisis" would not exist nor would it be in the forefront of world attention. In this respect, the Western definition of "Soviet Expansion" is archaic and misnamed. Authors Dowdy and Trood in, The Indian Ocean - Perspective in a Strategic Arena, believe that Soviet growth is, in fact, only a "counter imperialism" move and is motivated primarily to maintain parity with United States presence and influence in the region. ( 7:12)

Admiral Gorshkov, as early as the 1960's, saw, in a Mahanian sense, that history had set the precedent. Without a strong maritime force, a nation can not be powerful. Russia's inability to effect a United



States sea blockade during the Cuban Missile Crisis demonstrated its maritime weakness. Subsequently, a modernization program commenced to create a powerful "Blue Water" navy.

In order to effectively deploy this massive new fleet, three stumbling blocks had to be overcome if the Soviet Union was to achieve maritime superiority. The first problem pertains to warm water ports. Currently the Baltic, Northern, and Pacific Fleets are restricted by the environment. Much of the year they are bottled in by ice and weather. Establishing bases in the Indian Ocean will guarantee vitally needed warm water ports. Secondly, all of its fleets, to some extent, are restricted by geographic choke points. The Northern Fleet must transit the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) Gap, the Baltic Fleet through the Mediterranean, and the Pacific Fleet through the Sea of Japan. Indian Ocean basing will provide them, for the first time, direct access to a major ocean. Thirdly, to mobilize for a fleet engagement on their southern flank requires excessive time and distance. Indian Ocean ports will assure rapid mobilization of Soviet sea power to counter any seaborne threat. The American surface and subsurface threat pose a very real danger to the Soviet homeland, particularly when the submarine strategic threat is considered. Considering the remoteness of the Indian Ocean, the need to respond immediately to an offensive action against the Soviet Union or its client states, and the requirement to rapidly resupply forces to sustain a protracted battle, time and distance become critical factors. Early control of the logistics lines (sea superiority) will be a major determinant in the outcome of the naval battle. Ports within the region will enhance the Soviet's

ability to project power and give them the clear advantage over elements of the United States Navy's Seventh Fleet currently deployed in the Indian Ocean.

For these reasons, the Soviet Union quickly took advantage of the void and established a maritime presence after the British withdrew. Their initial deployment of two attack submarines, six major and minor surface combatants, and twelve auxiliary and support ships was only the tip of the iceberg. (8:24)

In conjunction with their increase in force posture, over the past two decades the Soviets have achieved port access in Mozambique, Madagascar, Seychelles, Ethiopia, South Yemen, and India. In comparison to the American port of Diego Garcia and limited staging rights in Oman under very restrictive conditions, the Soviet Union has a significant edge. Their mobilization problems to resupply, repair, and refit their Indian Ocean naval assets have been partially solved.

Undoubtedly, the most significant single step toward achieving Soviet goals was their recent partnership with India in December 1986. (9:44) The resultant "Delhi Declaration" may pave the way for increased port access and basing facilities. Additionally, through Soviet military aid, India's growing navy has the potential to become the most powerful naval presence in total numbers in the region, with strike capabilities third to only the United States and Soviet Union. This allegiance, although disputed as such, will dramatically change the balance of power in the region. A comment from Deepak Hegde, a member of India's rank and file, accurately identifies the meaning of this partnership:

Gorbachev's visit is one of the most important events of the

year. The kind of solidarity that the two countries are exhibiting is enough to make any country with ulterior motives think twice. ( 9:48)

If India's motives are, in the long run, to achieve "the old British Policy east of the Suez" as suggested by Dr Henry Kissinger in a recent editorial, and become the power in the Indian Ocean or simply an effort to gain a greater advantage over their enemy, Pakistan, remains to be seen. (10:30)

Further amplification of the Indian-Soviet relationship is necessary. The future of the Indian Ocean may very well depend on the outcome. The Soviet Union's motives are threefold: first, to gain a coalition against the American and Chinese threat on the southern and eastern flanks respectively; secondly, to expand their sphere of influence and gain basing rights to provide a closer strike range to an Indian Ocean threat; and thirdly, to bolster their critically troubled economy with new trade agreements. The ultimate goal remains to create a Soviet puppet state. India, on the other hand, has desires that, in the long run, do not support Soviet goals. China, India's "down the road" problem, is less of an immediate threat than is Pakistan. India looks alarmingly towards the west where she witnesses what she perceives as a dangerous military buildup in Pakistan. Although by total numbers, a more balanced force, and tactically capable field commanders, India would win a war with Pakistan, the cost would be unacceptably high. However, in conjunction with a Soviet drive through Pakistan towards the Indian Ocean, India could unite with the Soviet Union to achieve its first goal. (11:52) A real fear arises from the potential of this union. Were the Soviets to unite with India and sweep

through Pakistan, what would prevent their united momentum from increasing and developing into an attempt to sweep through Iran to the west to gain control of the Gulf? First, India does not have the internal structure to support such a venture nor does she have the desire to alienate the rest of the world, particularly the large Muslim population within her borders. The Soviet mindset may compel them to continue a sweep, but a united defense of the regional states (to include the United States, some NATO forces, France, Japan, Australia, etc.) would eventually defeat the attempt. This is assuming conventional warfare only. Were nuclear weapons thrown into the equation, this scenario rapidly becomes a no win situation. Were the Soviets to achieve the initial advantage, it is highly unlikely that they could eventually subjugate millions of Muslims and Hindus. The vast religious differences alone would make this a difficult and consuming task. Collectively, the fiercely religious Third World countries would probably not succumb to Soviet control and it is equally doubtful that they would openly accept Soviet ideologies without first exhausting all efforts of subversion. Strongly independent, the regional states oppose any and all outside influence and desire to be left alone to solve their own differences. With regard to the India-Pakistan problem, nuclear capabilities of both, whether actual or speculated, increase the volatility of this conflict. This situation, along with many other regional disputes, further influence the United States' resolve to provide for regional stability through a naval presence in support of what must be deemed a vital, if not survival interest to every nation of the world. (12:82)

Returning to the Soviet problem, the invasion of Afghanistan,

Cuban surrogate forces in Angola and Ethiopia, Soviet influence in the Greater Yemens and elsewhere are decisive arguments for an increase in United States presence. In addition to the Soviet surface and subsurface naval presence, the Backfire bomber potential increases the threat to the Persian Gulf. Capable of projecting power over 3000 miles, were they stationed in Afghanistan they would be within easy strike range of the SLOCs (300 miles at the closest point). (1:268) As the Soviet Union gains greater access to the Indian Ocean our defense posture must increase proportionally due to the dramatically reduced response time available to counter a Soviet move.

In what the Soviets might perceive as a normal progression of events, territories would be gained and land LOCs constructed (pipelines, railroads) to fortify their presence. Ultimate control of the flow of oil and resources could tip the world balance in their favor. Disruption of commerce to and from Southeast Asia, Japan, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand could force the user countries into increasing their power relationships with the Soviet Union. For example, were Japan to lose its source of oil from the Persian Gulf or be forced to rely on Soviet controlled oil, probable increased trade agreements and stipulations discouraging American trade as conditions for receiving the oil could reduce America's markets in Japan. The American-Japanese trade deficit could increase. The United States, dependent upon these markets to maintain the status quo, would be placed in dire straits. Its ability to support a world-wide defense posture would greatly diminish as would its influence in and support of NATO, for example. The direction that these events take would be in favor of the Soviet Union and its satellites. Countries might leap on the Soviet band wagon as the capabilities of the United States

as a super power diminished and as the lessor nations perceived that coexistence with the Soviet Union would assure their continued survival. Again, the reader must be reminded that this is a Soviet rationale towards global communist revolution. In reality, the nations would probably fight back. The cost to the Soviets would be too great. World control by the Soviet elite, backed by the Red Army, would be extremely difficult to sustain. In this sense, the ultimate goals of the Soviet Union are self-destructive. However, were they to successfully create friendly socialist states ruled by local communist sympathizers their goals might be attainable. The threat, however, still remains. As long as they can continue to promote the exchange of technology, create new markets, and establish "friendship agreements" they will continue to perceive that they can expand their sphere of influence by taking advantage of regional instabilities or by attempts to destabilize weakly structured countries.

Timing has been a critical factor for the Soviet Union. For example, during the United States involvement in Vietnam, the Soviet Union moved into the Indian Ocean when they were confident that the Americans would not become involved. Similarly, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan coincided with America's apparent lack of commitment to resolve the Iran Hostage Crisis. The Soviet Union felt strongly that it would not be treading on a Western interest by "expanding" into Afghanistan. (13:459) The potential for a United States reaction, or lack of reaction, has greatly influenced Soviet aggressiveness. Again, the risk factor of any Soviet action plays a major role in the decision making process. Under the Reagan Administration, the United States has clearly demonstrated that it is still capable of using its military forces when required.

Where forces are not employed, the Soviet Union continues in

its attempts to undermine United States influence and weaken their capabilities in the region. With some success, the Soviet Union has opened diplomatic doors with most of the members of the GCC. (14:136) If successful in this venture, they hope to be able to manipulate the cost of petroleum and ultimately hurt the Western economies. In that the Soviet Union currently has its own oil resources and, in fact, exports a considerable amount of oil and minerals, it perceives that it can strengthen its position in the world trade arena. (13:469) The Soviet Union currently has no real conservation program and are high users of energy. Unless they can rely more on their alternate sources of energy, nuclear power for example, we may observe the Soviet Union and Eastern Block countries coming into a real oil crisis in the 1990's. Could this situation develop into a Red Storm Rising scenario if the Soviets find themselves without the financial resources to import the needed oil or adequate facilities to create alternate means of energy? This question must also be considered as an argument for United States naval presence in the region.

A separate threat to stability in the Indian Ocean is the Iran-Iraq War. To accurately project this threat into the future is beyond the scope of this paper. However, the problem appears to be infinitely more complex than the Soviet threat. Coupled with the unresolved Palestinian issue and the lack of a true unification of the Arab states, the potential for a spillover of these conflicts into bordering countries and an escalation of the Middle East conflicts into global war is great and must not be overlooked. Again, United States force deployment may provide that deterrent presence. Although it probably will not have a

major impact on the future solutions, it might contain the problems within the region.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE LITTORAL STATES: A UNIFIED DEFENSE?

Collectively, from a military standpoint, the major Indian Ocean states could project a formidable defensive posture were there not super power presence in the region. Certainly, none of their assets could compare or compete with a nuclear powered battle group or a Kirov/Kiev surface action group; however, available maritime assets in conjunction with landbased air power could provide adequate area security. The problem remains: there are too many internal conflicts which prevent a collective defense effort. The issues range, as previously stated, from the Palestinian issue and its effects on the unification of the Arab states to the disruption to regional stability caused by the Iran-Iraq War. In almost every respect, these conflicts among the littoral states have been brewing for years. It is highly unlikely that these problems will be resolved in the near future. Complicate these issues with military and economic aid, and "friendship agreements" with the super powers and what remains is an unsolvable predicament. One obvious example is again the Palestinian issue. Our support of Israel, since the creation of that state, directly conflicts with our attempts to make friendly, open agreements with the Arab world. How can the Arab countries condone United States support of a country whose destiny, as interpreted in the "Book of Revelations", is to build a new temple of Israel and destroy the Dome of the Rock (Islam)? Although our relationships with Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt are good and improving, none of them will commit totally to an open treaty at the expense of their natural ties with their Arab brothers. Fear of a potential spillover of

the Iran-Iraq War and a possible super power confrontation caused by attacks on Gulf shipping; fear of a counter revolution from Iranian Islamic movements and increases in Soviet influence; fear of a Pakistan-Indian War, and other problems have led to strange bedfellow relationships. Many of the littoral states are unwilling to commit to open treaties but incapable of defending their national interests without American aid should regional strife evolve into major armed conflict. (15:25 to 29)

The author's attempts to portray conditions in the region, by no means, suggest incompetence or apathy on the part of the littoral states governments. The population structure, geographics, young but growing technology base, and history of this region are not yet supportive of collective defense by the states themselves. Since the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979, no littoral navy has had enough strength to assume the role as protector of the Gulf. (5: 86)

We will now take a look at the Indian Ocean states in the "Arc of Crisis" extending from India to Somalia. We will discuss: (1) how they interact, (2) how they counteract, (3) their influence on regional stability, and (4) their ties with the major powers.

India. Other than through various trade agreements with Iraq and Iran and joint memberships in the United Nations and other international organizations, India has little direct interaction with the littoral states under discussion.(16:1) Primarily a Hindu based society, its Muslim component of the population, except for religious pilgrimages, does not interact significantly with the remainder of the Indian Ocean Muslim population. From a regional security standpoint, India has not yet accepted a role in that portion of the Indian Ocean community striving for a collective

defense effort. However, as a potential buffer zone between the Soviet Union and the Indian Ocean should India oppose Soviet attempts to expand, India's role in providing for the future security of the region may become critical.

India's primary regional conflict remains with its historic enemy, Pakistan. Escalation of this conflict poses a very real threat to regional stability, particularly if super power involvement comes into play.

As the strongest indigenous naval power, India is capable of providing sufficient persuasive military presence to become a positive stabilizing force within the region. However, recent improved relations with the Soviet Union could result in just the opposite should India's goals for the region coincide with Soviet ambitions.

Although in the past, the United States was India's greatest trading partner, recent events indicate that India may become more dependent on the Soviet Union. (16:7) Since 1955, India has increased both its military and economic relationships with the Soviet Union in an attempt to counter the Pakistan threat, particularly after Pakistan's move into CENTO and SEATO and its acceptance of increased American military aid. (17:132) To counter more recent moves by Pakistan to improve its defense posture, India upgraded the "Treaty of Peace and Friendship" with the Soviet Union and, in an alliance of common goals, signed the "Delhi Declaration." (12:25) As a result, increased Soviet port access to direly needed warm water ports may be forthcoming. Current Soviet port access (based on periodic area briefs given to carrier air air wing aircrew during a 1985 Indian Ocean deployment) at Bombay, Cochin,

Kandla, Nestor, Port Blair, among others significantly strengthen the Soviet Union's ability to project power in the region. To date, India has received over four billion dollars in Soviet aid. (11:136) The injection of Soviet weapon systems into the country has dramatically effected the balance of power within the region. In particular, with the arrival of advanced Soviet technology (AWACs, MIG-29s, Kilo, Tango, Juliet class submarines, IL-76 transports, TU-142 Bears, MI-17,26, KA-25 helos, surface to surface, surface to air, air to surface missiles in support of an already extensive Soviet inventory of weapons and systems) and the nuclear capability of India, the world wonders in which direction India will tip the scale of power. (18:26)

Pakistan. With regard to the littoral states, Pakistan has some trade agreements with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Additionally, Saudi Arabia provides a substantial amount of foriegn aid to the country. (19:1) Pakistan receives considerable support from the GCC and in turn provides military training facilities for the defense forces of the GCC. Additionally, Pakistani troops are believed to be stationed in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. (20:236) Common regional goals between the GCC and Pakistan promote these mutual support agreements. (20:236) Pakistan's primarily Muslim population also influences the decisions of the remainder of the Islamic world to provide increased aid should a Soviet threat from the north or an Indian threat from the east endanger regional security. Pakistan's defensive efforts are concentrated almost entirely on the very real threats to the three of its borders. To the north, the Soviets have routinely made excursions into Pakistan in search of Afghani rebel strongholds. To the west, Pakistan looks with much concern at the

government of the Ayatollah and its potential influence on Pakistan's Muslim population. To the east, Pakistan arms against its historic enemy, India, and strongly fears Indian dominance. (5: 86)

By virtue of Pakistan's very location, it has become a vital buffer zone between the Soviet Union and the Indian Ocean. Soviet moves into Pakistan from Afghanistan, at some future point, support Soviet goals. Pakistan could become a critical focal point to regional security.

From a super power standpoint, Pakistan is very cooperative with the United States and China primarily for security reasons. Defense, technological, and financial aid from China have greatly improved Pakistan's defense posture against Soviet supported India. This coalition of sorts may discourage a Soviet or Indian thrust into the country. Additionally, delivery of and contract for American weapon systems (F-16, E-2C (Navy AWAC), M-48 tanks, helos with TOW, Harpoon missiles, etc.) have dramatically improved Pakistan's force posture. (21:21) Although Pakistan appears to be favoring a western allegiance, its vacillating past makes it an unknown. Concern over a joint Soviet-Indian invasion and a potential for future conflict with Iran will probably keep Pakistan on the side of the free world.

Iran. Iran and Iraq make up over 80 percent of the Gulf population. Although Iran is primarily Shi'a Muslim, it is non-Arab and has little ethnic tie to the Arab states. (22:5) As a member of OPEC and the Organization of Islamic Conference, Iran has limited interaction with the littoral states. (23:1) An oil rich country and capital surplus oil exporter, Iran has primarily an economic role in the Persian Gulf organizations. (7:17)

Under the radical Ayatollah Khomeini government, Iran is embroiled in a costly war of attrition with its neighbor, Iraq. A serious threat to Persian Gulf shipping and the SLOCs, Iran routinely attacks merchant vessels "suspected" of carrying supplies to Iraq. Fear of the radical nature of the Persians and the potential for spillover of the Iran-Iraq War causes other littoral states to scramble to protect themselves. In effect, this causes a miniature arms race within the region. In 1984, the Ayatollah threatened the security of Hormuz when he declared, "Either the Gulf will be safe for all, or it will be safe for none." (5:97) Currently Iran is definitely not a player in promoting regional stability.

Iran has demonstrated little favoritism to any of the super powers. The Bureau of Public Affairs printed in "Background Notes" (May 1982):

Following the fall of the Shah, Khomeini's revolutionary regime initiated sharp foreign policy changes. In the Middle East, Iran has aligned itself with the radical Arab states of Libya and Syria and with the Palestine Liberation Organization against Israel and Egypt. Iran's regional goals are dominated by the desire to curtail or eliminate super power influence . . . (24:7)

Prior to the fall of the Shah, Iran's Navy was the most capable navy in the region and played a major role in the security of the Persian Gulf. Since that time, the Iran-Iraq War has consumed most of Iran's military assets and manpower. Both the United States and Soviet Union look towards Iran as the "wild card" whose inclinations are not yet revealed. The United States' concerns deal more with the security of the Gulf and the SLOCs. The Soviet's concerns stem from a fear of the potential Iranian-Islamic influence on the Soviet Muslim population. (5:95)

Were either super power able to gain a foothold in Iran, forces based at Bandar e Abbas, Jask, and Chahbar would pose a real threat to the Straits of Hormuz and Gulf shipping.

Iraq. The population base of this Arab country is primarily Shi'a Muslim.(22:5) As a participating member of several international organizations common to the littoral states and as a capital surplus oil exporter, Iraq has some interaction among its neighbors. ( 7:17) Although most of its efforts are directed towards defeating Iran, it has taken some significant steps in improving its relationship with its Arab brothers. As the Iran-Iraq War progresses, more Arab Gulf states have begun to provide increased open support for Iraq. (24:8) External sources of aid have come from the United States, Soviet Union, France, Spain, Italy, and Egypt. ( 5: 25) Aside from its obvious counteraction with Iran, the only remaining dispute of any significance has been its ongoing border conflict with Kuwait. ( 22:13)

Currently a detriment to regional stability, Iraq routinely attacks Gulf shipping and Iran's Kharg Island Depot. Until the Iraq-Iran War is resolved, Iraq will be unable to provide assets for a community security effort. Her small maritime force of frigates could eventually play a major role in the defense of the SLOCs. ( 7: 83)

Although Iraq receives varying degrees of aid from both super powers, it has made concerted efforts to distance itself from them, particularly the Soviet Union. (22:14) A recent attempt by the Soviet Union to gain port facilities access was turned down by the Iraqi government. (22:463) Additionally, Iraq still holds some deep resentment towards the results of the Camp David Peace Accords in 1978, and is

reluctant to develop any meaningful relationship with the United States. The Palestinian issue is still a factor. (22:15)

Kuwait. As an active member of the CCC, Kuwait strives to play an even larger part in promoting regional stability. Primarily Sunni Arab, Kuwait, as do most of the Arab countries, looks alarmingly at the radical Shi'a population of Khomeini's regime and is apprehensive about Iranian forces on the Faw Peninsula only 25 miles away. (25:55) As a capital surplus oil exporter and member of OPEC with a large per capita gross national product (GNP), Kuwait interacts positively with the other oil rich countries from purely an economic standpoint. (22:9) Pro-Palestinian and fiercely independent, Kuwait opposes super power influence and refuses them port access.

Aside from the Iranian threat, Kuwait continues to have minor border conflicts with its neighbor Iraq. Although a member of the GCC, Kuwait is reluctant to commit to a bilateral security agreement with Saudi Arabia and be drawn into Saudi's cold war conflict with Iran. (26:181) With its small, defensive military force of approximately 50 combat aircraft, 12,400 strong military members, and a small Korean built navy, Kuwait could contribute to the collective defense effort. (22:136, 25:55)

Kuwait's relationship with the super powers is cold. Receiving military and technical aid from both the United States and the Soviet Union, the Kuwaiti government clearly refuses to take sides. However, in the event of a Soviet thrust into the region, Kuwait would probably lean towards the West and provide port access and facilities to the United States Navy. (13:467)

Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia, the largest Arab nation in the Gulf,



is primarily a Sunni Muslim population. (22:5) As a major member of the GCC, with a substantial population and military base, Saudi Arabia will continue to be a major influence in the region. (22:5) Money stable, Saudi Arabia is a major investor of capital throughout the world. Many of the poorer Muslim communities look to this country for financial aid. As the second most influential nation in the Indian Ocean, Saudi Arabia plays a large role in regional stability in the military, social, and economic sense. Open disputes with its Arab brothers are minimal. Saudi Arabia's biggest regional conflict remains its cold war with the Persians of Iran. This conflict has greatly hindered the GCC's unanimous acceptance of the bilateral security agreement.

Saudi Arabia's growing military forces make it a major player in the defense of the Persian Gulf. Author Emile Nakhleh suggests in his book, The Persian Gulf and American Policy, that Saudi Arabia is the only littoral state that seems to have a global perspective of the conflicts within the region. He says, "By forging the three sides (the Arab, the Islamic, and the United States) into one logical whole, Saudi Arabia seems to be attempting to build an area of strategic consensus of its own." (22:65)

Clearly leaning towards the West, Saudi Arabia is in a position to radically effect the world economy and flow of money if antagonized. Although a supporter of Palestine, Saudi Arabia sees a real need to continue its mutual cooperation ties with the United States. As supporters of United States presence in the region, they perceive that the United States is the only nation capable of leading a settlement in the Palestinian issue by virtue of America's influence on the state of Israel. (22:65)

Even stronger ties with the United States still rest on the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli problem.

Bahrain. Bahrain is not only the smallest of the Persian Gulf states it is also the poorest. Although a member of the GCC, it has little regional influence. (22:5) Except for a longstanding minor border dispute with Qatar, Bahrain has a relatively peaceful relationship with its Arab neighbors. Pro-Palestinian, this Shi'a Muslim based population tends to accept the GCC decisions of the larger, more powerful members. Unable to contribute significant manpower numbers to a united defense, Bahrain currently has very little impact on regional security. However, due to its excellent port facilities, it may play a larger role in the future. Home of the United States Navy's forward deployed Middle East Force since 1949, port facility access, as suggested by Alvin J. Cottrell in "Aspects of United States Naval Deployments in the Indian Ocean", preserves the "continuity of United States naval deployments in the Indian Ocean." (27:452) Although Bahrain clearly aligns itself with the West, it desires to, like its Arab neighbors, keep some distance from truly open relationships with either super power. ( 5:25)

Qatar. This Arab, primarily Sunni Muslim, country is the second smallest of the Persian Gulf states. (22:5) As a member of the GCC and capital surplus oil exporter, its role in the region is more economic in nature rather than military. ( 7:17) Pro-Palestinian and against super power involvement in the region, it aligns itself strongly to the community cause. Aside from its border disputes with Bahrain, Qatar is at peace with its neighbors and does not create a destabilizing situation in the region.

Strongly opposing super power influence in the Persian Gulf, Qatar favors neither the Soviet Union nor the United States. Accordingly, it has refused to accept any military or defensive support and denies port access to the super powers. Qatar would probably support the decisions of the larger Arab states and side with Western power in the event of a Soviet thrust into the region.

United Arab Emirates. The people of the United Arab Emirates are primarily Sunni Muslim. (22:5) A capital surplus oil exporter with a high per capita gross national product, this country is an important and powerful member of the GCC. The United Arab Emirates has made concerted efforts to solve many of the problems within the Persian Gulf region. With the falling Gulf oil profits, the United Arab Emirates has attempted to improve ties with Iran. Additionally it has offered to mediate many of the regional disputes. Like Kuwait, it is reluctant to accept Saudi Arabia's bilateral treaty of protection and is somewhat skeptical of Saudi's motives. (28:128,129) Having the fourth largest military force in the Gulf, the United Arab Emirates can significantly impact regional stability and security were it to commit to a community defense pact.

Pro-Palestinian, the United Arab Emirates is reluctant to improve relations with the United States until the issue is resolved. Although it has diplomatic relations with both the Soviet Union and the United States, and purchases some American military hardware, this country has no open door policies with either super power. As an Arab state, it will probably join with its Arab neighbors and the United States to defeat a threat, or threats, from the north.

Oman. Oman has a very diversified Arab population. Although primarily Shi'a Muslim, 19 percent of its population are Christians. (22:5)

An active member of the GCC, Oman, like Saudi Arabia, is a major player in organizing the Gulf states and providing a defensive posture against threats to the Persian Gulf and Western Indian Ocean. Pro-Palestinian, Oman is cautious about furthering its already strong ties with the United States for fear of losing its reputation in the Arab world.

Although Oman still considers that it has an unpaid debt to Iran for assistance in quelling the Iranian rebellion in 1979, it perceives the Khomeini led government as a real threat to regional security. On its southern borders, Oman maintains an alert defensive posture to counter any threat from South Yemen, a longstanding enemy. (33:8)

With a credible force of 14,000 military members and a growing brown water navy, Oman will play a major role in the defense effort of the region. (22:136) By virtue of its location, Oman is the primary indigenous security force of the Strait of Hormuz and the vital link between the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean SLOCs.

Oman has diplomatic relations with both the United States and Soviet Union; however, it openly leans toward the United States. Routinely American, French, and Omani forces conduct joint military readiness and training exercises in the Gulf of Oman. Second only to Saudi Arabia in its close ties to the United States, Oman provides direly needed, although limited, basing at Masirah, Thumrait, and Seeb.

Democratic Yemen (PDRY). The PDRY is a highly volatile country. Primarily Sunni Muslim, this Arab country has an almost paranoic view of the aggressiveness of its neighbors. (22:5) Its longstanding conflicts with North Yemen and Oman have retarded its growth and potential as an influential regional power. Its obsession to control North Yemen and

prolong the conflict make it a destabilizing influence in the region.

A devoutly Marxist government, the PDRY leans heavily toward the Soviet Union. Receiving over two billion dollars in Soviet aid, South Yemen has opened virtually all of its doors and bases to the Soviets. (11:135) In addition to Soviet support, the PDRY has received some aid from Libya and Iraq and is allied to their capitalist Western influence. ( 5:25)

Yemen Arab Republic (YAR). Although the YAR is influenced greatly by the Western aligned Saudi Arabian government, it receives over 1.4 billion dollars in Soviet aid. (11:136) This Shi'a Muslim based population is fighting for legitimacy as is the PDRY. Like the PDRY, all of its security efforts are directed at the enemy on its southern border. J. E. Peterson in his paper "The Two Yemens and the International Impact of Inter-Yemeni Relations" puts the Greater Yemen crisis in perspective: between the two countries "a common goal has been present in fomenting revolution . . ." (30:218) Until the war of the greater Yemens is resolved, like Iraq, Iran, and South Yemen, this country can do nothing but destabilize the region.

North Yemen receives aid from the Soviet Union, as previously stated, the United States and Saudi Arabia. Its newly formed Marxist government favors a Soviet alignment. Consequently there is a Soviet presence within the country. United States military aid amounts to F-5's, C-130's, M-60 tanks, and AFC's . (30:221) The United States does not have basing rights in this country. The YAR's ties with Libya undermine super power attempts (primarily American) to improve relations with the country.

Ethiopia. Ethiopia lies directly across the Gulf of Aden from the Arabian Peninsula. One of the poorest countries in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia has been greatly influenced by the Soviet Union and is currently the largest East African Soviet client receiving over four billion dollars in Soviet aid. (11:132) Although it has no interaction with the Arab world or any organization promoting regional security, Ethiopia's location makes it of strategic importance. Ethiopia's conflict with Somalia over the Ogaden makes it a destabilizing influence in the Gulf of Aden, particularly the Eabel Mandeb and Suez choke points. With the presence of Cuban troops, Soviet advisors, and a well-established communist government, Ethiopia's alignment is clear.

Somalia. Although Somalia mirrors its enemy Ethiopia as being an impoverished country, its strategic location and Western alignment put it in a critical position to counter Soviet influence on the Horn. The future of its relationship with the United States is uncertain. Currently its Western alignment is a result of its need to counter Soviet supported Ethiopia. Continued Western assistance to strengthen an already adequate military base will help increase Somalia's ability to positively impact the security of the Red Sea access to the Indian Ocean.

Although each country in the Indian Ocean littoral has, to some degree, a role in the drama taking place, a complete explanation of the real underlying problems in the region would require a much more in-depth study of the region's history well beyond the scope of this paper. Even then, the analysis would be mostly conjecture. It should suffice to say that a united community of littoral states is about as likely as an uncomplicated United States-Soviet Union coexistence treaty. The largest regional organization, the GCC, cannot even get its members to agree

on a course of action.

The South and East African countries along with Southeast Asia and Australia, although players, were not considered as major regional influences primarily due to the direction of their interests and inability to make a major impact on the course of events. Australia, for example, is more easterly oriented, not dependent on Persian Gulf oil, and does not have the maritime force structure large enough to project power. The Africans, more embroiled in internal, civil problems were excluded for similar reasons. Certainly, were a situation to develop (Soviet or Indian dominance , for example) that threatened the entire Indian Ocean region, all would probably contribute to the best of their ability and proportional to the degree of threat to their national interests.

It is all too evident that no Indian Ocean nation alone is capable of protecting regional wealth and stability. India, however, may someday possess this capability if it continues to strengthen its navy at the present rate. Currently, territorial disputes, cultural, ethnic, religious, and historic conflicts and the cumulative lack of any industrial or military power base prevent an organized defense posture.

Considering the vast complexities of the Indian Ocean problem, American presence, more than ever, is the only credible deterrent to Soviet expansion and further promotes regional stability by assuming a security role that might otherwise be left to the responsibility of a fractured, unstable region.

## CHAPTER IV

### UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT

Although a move has been afoot by the GCC to discourage super power involvement in the Indian Ocean and minimize the potential for an escalation of the East-West struggle into nuclear proportions, the bottom line still remains that the Iran-Iraq War and defensive arms races among the littoral states require them to seek military and technical aid from nations with sufficient power bases to export the necessary expertise and hardware; i.e., the super powers. Soviet ambitions to control the oil and mineral resources from the region and achieve their dream of global domination is a threat which must be countered.

#### 1. Why the United States as a Protector?

Why must the defense of the Indian Ocean be provided by the United States? Why cannot the major user nations, Western Europe and Japan, assume partial responsibility for regional defense proportional to their requirement for Indian Ocean resources?

Some critics denounce United States presence as a ruse to create an American foothold in this unstable region. They further claim that American motives are not unlike those of the Soviet Union. They justify this allegation by pointing out that United States presence contradicts American national interests in the region, particularly in light of its diminishing requirement for Persian Gulf oil (in 1983, Persian Gulf oil represented only three percent of all United States oil imports). ( 596) This focus on a single issue is much too narrow. From a resources standpoint, oil is only the tip of the iceberg. Although American Persian Gulf oil requirements are currently low, it is predicted that the cycle will



swing back to a critical requirement in the 1990's as the present reserves are depleted. A distinguished speaker at the Air War College recently suggested that the United States may very well experience another "oil shock." In 1983, the United States Bureau of Mines reported that 50 percent of all American metal and mineral needs came from the third world countries of the Indian Ocean, Asia, and the Pacific. (p. 45) Many of these resources (nickel, cobalt, copper, iron, tritium, manganese, titanium, etc.) are critical American defense needs. Further the fine economic balance among the major free world trade powers (Japan, Western Europe, and the United States) rests heavily on two of the three's ability to obtain Persian Gulf oil (Japan and Western Europe). With their dependence on the Gulf to fill 75 and 65 percent of their oil needs respectively, the power that the Persian Gulf has over them and the global economic balance makes regional stability a vital American interest.

United States naval presence as both a deterrent to Soviet expansionism and a stabilizing force, when littoral states are threatened by aggressive neighbors such as Iran, has proven most effective. As a mobile, self-sufficient, seagoing force, the Navy can provide for a credible projection of power with less disruption and less apparent commitment than would be perceived by a land based deployment of Army and Air forces. The presence of a carrier battle group in international waters has dramatic psychological effects. Although not committed to direct involvement as might be a forward deployed army, a large battle group presence, just over the horizon, presents a potential tiger that, to date, countries such as Iran and South Yemen, have smartly

avoided confrontation with. This naval presence certainly has not terminated or prevented hostilities among the Indian Ocean states but evidence demonstrates that it has had a stabilizing effect and in many cases reduced the potential for escalation and spillover to other littoral states.

Since 1979, the United States Navy has maintained a significant maritime presence in the region. The USS Constellation Battle Group, first to actually deploy into the Indian Ocean aside from a small Middle East Force contingent homeported in Bahrain, responded, after direction from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the Yemen War in the Gulf of Aden. Her presence successfully achieved two major goals: (1) it reduced the flow of Soviet materials into the country and discouraged direct Soviet involvement (based on unclassified intelligence briefings to the carrier aircrews); and (2) discouraged spillover of the war into the bordering state of Oman. This presence improved America's relationship with Oman and helped lay the foundation for future basing access rights in that country. Since then, a naval show of force has been deployed to demonstrate American resolve to apply force if required during the conflicts in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Horn of Africa (Ethiopia and Somalia), Iran-Iraq War, and the Iran Hostage Crisis. Although it is difficult to measure the success of these missions, discussions among several military members of the various Indian Ocean states with the author, unanimously indicated that American naval presence reduced tensions and provided a readily apparent

feeling of security among those nations fearing spillover of the Gulf Wars into their country. Although these interviews were far from being a scientific survey, it is the author's opinion that the manner in which the comments were given indicated that they were heartfelt.

It has been previously established that the United States is the only credible counter to the Soviet presence. Consider other user powers, primarily Japan and Western Europe. Both have impressive naval capabilities. Presently, only the French in Djibouti and, to a lesser extent, Australia and New Zealand, maintain a maritime presence in the Indian Ocean. Why cannot a collective naval defense among these countries be formed to reduce the load on the United States Seventh Fleet?

The user nation with the greatest dependence on oil is Japan. Japan's military strength is limited by a defense provision in their constitution (written by General Mac Arthur) after their defeat in World War Two. Japan's naval capability is large; however, as a self defense force it is restricted to homeland defense. Were it not restricted from offensively projecting power, it has neither the training nor experience to conduct projected, extended operations in the Indian Ocean. Aside from the fact that many of the Southeast Asian countries would become extremely uneasy were Japan to increase its defense posture, probably the most influential factor preventing Japan from building a maritime force with offensive capabilities is the vehement reluctance of the Japanese people to put themselves in a position where history could repeat itself. For the Japanese to accept a role in the defense of the Indian Ocean requires a much greater threat than they currently perceive.

On the other side of the Eurasian continent, Western European

navies and armed forces are committed to the defense of Nato and do not have the assets both to project naval power into the Indian Ocean and respond to their commitments to their NATO allies. This might seem contradictory considering Great Britain's response to the Falkland Crisis and the effect of that response on the NATO force structure during the war. Issues, those of sovereignty and the protection of British subjects, among a few, created a unique situation for Great Britain, one that challenged its basic right to protect its property.

Australia and New Zealand should be considered Far Eastern Navies. (31:64) Tied to ASEAN and numerous treaties with island nations to their north and northeast, Both Australia and New Zealand must direct their capable but limited navies in that direction. Although Australia and the United States still share a common defensive agreement in the, now, two party ANZUS pact, Australia, like New Zealand, (who subsequently withdrew from ANZUS in response to the nuclear issues) fears that a super power confrontation in the Indian Ocean may detrimentally effect their desires to make their area of the world a nuclear free zone. Although current American basing rights on the continent preclude Australia's immunity from strategic targeting by the Soviet Union, they still desire to minimize the nuclear threat to their nation arising from the volatile potential of the Indian Ocean region. Additionally, aside from the aforementioned issues, were Australia and New Zealand to become involved in an Indian Ocean dispute, their naval assets limit their ability to sustain any meaningful operation in the Western Indian Ocean.

By virtue of its mighty power base and degree of world influence, the United States, in response to the Soviet move into the region after the departure of Great Britain, has become not only a peacekeeping force

but also a powerful potential for maintaining stability, containing and preventing the escalation of internal conflicts. With this premise, a case can be made to justify United States as a participant in the objective of

## 2. The Strategy.

Five major international issues are relevant to regional issues. First, international relations between nations and their territorial integrity. Second, the United States desires to maintain the global strategic posture of a stable world order (military parity). Third, the free flow of Indian Ocean resources and access to foreign markets must be protected. Fourth, military backup for the Middle East Force must be provided to ensure their complete safety. Fifth, international terrorism must be countered. (15:1)

Due to the current lack of available bases to support rapid mobilization or prepositioning of United States Air Force or Army assets, a forward deployed, self-contained, flexible navy appears to be the only option. This American venture cannot, however, be adequately supported without a joint military effort encompassing heavy airlift, AWAC and tanker support, joint intelligence collecting, and possibly long range strategic bomber support (B-52 Harpoon and minelaying capabilities). These assets, with their extended range capability, can be supported from bases well outside the Indian Ocean region. The very scope of the mission requires a combination of land, sea, and air assets. However, the final front line deployment phase remains the responsibility of the United States Navy and its ability to project power from seaborne assets only.

To support their interests, the United States issued a hard line stance as a result of the tumultuous events taking place in Iraq-Iran and further supported by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Carter Doctrine declared, "An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region . . . will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." (5: 96) President Reagan further elaborated on the policy by stating that it had become an active pursuit of peace and security in which regional events tie in with the cultural will of the people to coexist. (15:2) Subsequently USCENTCOM was established in 1982. Under CENTCOM's control were assets from the Seventh Fleet deployed in the region (Carrier Task Force 70), the Marines Amphibious Ready Group Alpha, the Rapid Deployment Force, and over 230,000 American troops. ( 5:86) The directed mission of these deployed American forces are to: (1) ensure naval sea and air superiority; (2) mine and blockade Hormuz if necessary to contain any perceived threat; (3) conduct tactical strikes if required; (4) conduct limited amphibious actions if required, (5) improve relations with border countries not sympathetic to Soviet designs; and (6) establish a foothold for future free world development of Indian Ocean resources. (32:1)

Our mission sends very real signals to our allies, friends, the Soviet Union, and any country wishing to upset the balance of power in the littoral region. They are: (1) the United States demonstrates its resolve to ensure world stability and will inject presence and power into a troubled region with a combination of marine forces and naval superiority; (2) the United States supports its alliances and commitments to its allies and Third World friends; and (3) the United States willingly shoulders the burdens greater than those required by individual members

of an alliance by virtue of its leadership role in the free world.

The maritime strategy is a dynamic one. It encompasses: (1) preventing the seas from becoming a hostile medium of attack against the United States and its allies; (2) ensuring that the United States has unimpeded use of its ocean lifelines to its allies and forward deployed forces, its energy and mineral resources, and its trade partners; and (3) enabling the United States to project forces in support of its objectives and to support combat ashore should deterrence fail. (14)

Time and again it has been the Navy that has responded first to crisis situations. As previously discussed, the Navy is the tip of the spear in power projection. Its ability to present a show of force in international waters has had dramatic psychological impact. The unknown, a carrier battle group just over the horizon with its powerful military arm can be a humbling experience. Not a panacea for every regional conflict (American presence did little to influence the outcome of the Bangladesh War for example), this forward strategy, a strategy of deterrence in peacetime, remains the Navy's primary goal. Vice Admiral Mustin's statement in a 1986 Naval War College Review puts it all in perspective: "If the striking fleet is to be an element of conventional deterrence it must be in a position to deliver convincing retaliation to Soviet adventurism." (38:2) In wartime, the strategy becomes a forward offensive one aimed right at the heart of Soviet military presence in the region. As Admiral James D. Watkins, former Chief of Naval Operations, stated in a 1985 issue of U.S. Naval Proceedings, "Naval forces will destroy Soviet forces in the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, and other forward areas, neutralize Soviet clients if required, and fight our way

towards Soviet home waters." (39:3)

There is another, often overlooked, advantage of the naval strategy. If one believes the "one front" philosophy, i.e., that the Soviets train solely for a major thrust into West Europe, United States naval presence on their southern flank weakens this strategy. Providing them a second front to defend against, that they draw valuable resources from their one front theater to counter the American Navy in the Indian Ocean. American forces, coupled with littoral state assets, could inflict considerable peripheral damage, particularly if the Soviets are forced to counter the potential strategic threat (submarines and long range missiles) to the homeland. If they truly fear the potential of a carrier battle group and a united littoral defense and perceive a threat to their homeland, they might be forced to reevaluate their present optimistic position of rapid success against NATO. The increased drain on their failing economy to maintain the edge in a two front war may convince them that their expansionist aims are much too costly to pursue. Unfortunately, many can equally argue that this newly perceived threat will lead to an escalation in the nuclear arms race and increase the potential for super power nuclear confrontation. Both arguments have merit; however, we must hope that the rational mind will prevail. Peaceful coexistence is infinitely better than non-existence. Containment achieved through preparedness remains the key to the current maritime strategy employed.

### 3. United States Naval Presence: Viable and Survivable.

Again, emphasis must be placed on a joint military response. One carrier battle group alone will not fair well in an Indian Ocean war. The vulnerability of the force is relative to the threat. To suggest that a carrier battle group will be defeated in the first nuclear strike



is probably correct. What military force is not vulnerable against such extremes in warfare? Although a naval force may be more subjected to attack by nuclear weapons due to the lack of any collateral damage, than a land based target, the effect on the target is the same. The vulnerability of American bases in Europe is equally tenuous. However, in conventional warfare, the naval order of battle would require a multiple carrier battle group composed of at a minimum two, but more probably three carriers, and their associated combat and support vessels (including subsurface defenses). A joint defensive posture using carrier assets (F-14 Tomcats, F-18 Hornets, A-6 Intruders, E-2C Hawkeyes, S-3 Vikings, and Anti-submarine warfare helos), Air Force AWAC and tanker assets, Aegis cruisers, and attack submarines in a multiple battle group posture create a near impenetrable defense with a strike capability to project power long ranges (1000 miles or greater). All of the assets mentioned are available in the Pacific theater and will not be taken from the NATO force structure.

Soviet strike assets will encounter heavy if not unacceptable losses in an attempt to defeat the carriers. In 1985, in the Sea of Japan, the author witnessed a simulated coordinated strike of Soviet bomber aircraft against a three carrier battle group. Over 60 Badgers, Bears, and backfires were launched simultaneously against the group. This scenario would probably mirror a Soviet real world attempt with their bombers stationed in Afghanistan or India. The Navy's ultimate goal to destroy the missile carriers prior to release of their weapons was accomplished. In almost every case attacking aircraft were intercepted and nullified prior to entering the inner defense of the carrier or high value units. In that much of the Navy's training, as in this example, was conducted against the actual Soviet threat, there can be no better training short

of actual war. It might also be added that this scenario took place when the exact location of the carriers was known by the Soviet Union (due to the restricted operating area in the Sea of Japan). In the real world, the carriers have routinely used environmental conditions (weather) and tactical ruses to vanish for days at a time, undetected by either satellite, air, surface, or subsurface units. And in the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean, a single or multiple carrier battle group (big ocean, little ship theory) can provide defense in depth covering more than a thousand square miles of sea surface. I might add that this tactical employment does not significantly restrict the ability of the strike aircraft to project power if sufficient tanker assets, either from within the battle group or by Air Force support, are available. Naval early warning and weapons capabilities, use of the environment to maneuver (hide the carrier or high value unit in the weather), coupled with the incredible amount of punishment a large carrier can absorb before it is out of commission, demonstrate that the vulnerability of the United States Navy is not as high as one might assume. Critics need only look at the USS Forrestal or USS Oriskany fires to see that, had wartime operational necessity dictated, both carriers could have resumed flight operations, ergo conducted their primary mission, within days. There are just too many variables (fogs of war) to simply state that the carrier battle group will be the first to go. In a defensive posture, should we be reacting to a Soviet first strike, one must consider the Navy's surface, air, and subsurface capabilities as a combined, mutually supportive force. The outcome of any major engagement will be determined by the ability to sustain, the technological edge, and attrition.

There are many problems that need to be addressed. Although naval forces are a viable means for providing security in the region, their ability to sustain protracted operations is hampered by the long logistics support lines. Current resupply facilities at Diego Garcia, Oman, and Egypt have partially solved this problem; however, increased access rights would enhance sustainability. Again, a detailed analysis is the primary objective and land basing of armed forces in the region should be avoided at this time. The scope of "access" should be limited in peacetime. There is an obvious risk. These depots could become "prizes" were the Soviets to preempt by force. This assures that they are willing to risk confrontation with the American Fleet for this booty. Again, the risk is probably too great to undertake such a venture. To what degree American basing rights will increase in the event of a major regional conflict is highly speculative. A foot in the door is infinitely better than a closed door. Were there a major Soviet offensive in the area or a spillover of the Iran-Iraq War, some basing would probably become available along with joint military ventures. Other problems: extreme weather conditions (oppressive heat, rough seas, predominantly poor weather conditions during the winter months, high humidity), long on-station times in excess of 100 days between port visits, heavy operational tempos, crew and systems fatigue, and a very thin resupply link of critical essentials (jet fuel, weapons, parts, foodstuffs, mail) detract from the fighting capabilities of the battle group. During multiple Indian Ocean cruises, this author has witnessed incredible degrees of teamwork, leadership, battle group integrity, and dedication of personnel to an objective they can understand. This close knit "brotherhood" significantly compensates for many of the problems inherent with extended forward

deployments. Morale, although critical to the effectiveness of the United States Navy, does not alone win wars. Logistics and basing problems must be resolved. CENTCOM has been tasked with this responsibility.

Clearly, without the ability to counter the Soviet threat, the loss of American presence, the stakes would be too high. With the waning Soviet economy and abuse of their own resources, they will eventually be forced to seek alternative sources-- Indian Ocean resources. As demonstrated in Angola, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Poland, etc., Soviet expansion, unless checked, will continue. A logical flow would be to project into Pakistan from Afghanistan (with or without India's support) and simultaneously sweep through war torn Iran to secure the Persian Gulf. Whether this move can be sustained is highly questionable. The real threat lies in the explosiveness of such a venture and the degree of escalation during the response phases. A Soviet victory and its probable negative impact on the free world economy could upset the balance of world power in their favor. Whether this is a realistic assumption of what might happen is pure speculation, particularly considering the gross differences between Soviet ideologies and those of the littoral states. It is very clear that without a deterrent force, the risk is greatly increased.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Critics suggest that the United States leave the Indian Ocean region and let regional strife be settled by the littoral states. If American assistance is requested, then and only then should they become involved and only if in their vital interest. The problem with this approach is that the United States then becomes reactive. We have seen that, because of the very nature of the conflicts and the remoteness of the region, any reaction would most probably be too late. There must be a deterrent force with sufficient power near the area of conflict. This is a fundamental rationale for our world-wide commitments and deployments. United States military presence, spearheaded by a forward deployed navy, is mandatory if regional stability and security are to be achieved. Collectively, the littoral states could provide this security; but, as we have already shown, internal conditions among the states prevent the collective security process.

Soviet might, coupled with their stated intentions and warnings to the free world that they will extinguish imperialism world-wide, has been repeatedly demonstrated by their coercive and manipulative moves into unstable regions. As a world power, the United States must meet the challenge, for it alone has the capacity to stand toe to toe with the Soviet bear.

Peaceful coexistence is America's motive and global stability its goal. Parity in military power with those who might disrupt and thwart this goal is essential. Naval power projection as an element of a joint effort satisfies this requirement.

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